

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PUBLIC CAN PARTICIPATE IN CHANGING THE LIST OF ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTED BY TREATY

The public will have a voice in deciding which plants and animals should go on or off the list of species protected by the Endangered Species Treaty, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

"We are encouraging maximum public participation in our decisionmaking process," Schreiner said about the proposed regulations which were published in the March 24, 1978, Federal Register. All comments received by May 23 will be considered.

The proposed rule, amending the February 22, 1977, regulations with which the United States implemented the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, sets out the criteria for listing species and for the public to petition for additions, deletions, or changes in status of the species listed.

Previously there were no clear-cut procedures established for public participation. Most of the species presently listed were placed there during the original treaty negotiations in 1973. Since that time the list has been amended once by the countries at a meeting in Berne, Switzerland, in 1973.

The Convention lists species in one of three categories (called appendices) according to their degree of imperilment and the pressure that international demand places on their survival. Permits are required for international shipment (commercial and noncommercial) of any of the listed animals and plants, their parts, products, or derivatives.

The proposed regulation provides for public involvement in several ways. The public can initiate a proposed amendment to the appendices with a formal, documented request to the Director, and it can also comment and submit data on proposals submitted by others, including foreign countries. However, public participation is limited to the U.S. decisionmaking process, as the ultimate outcome is subject to agreement by a majority of the 44 countries currently bound by the Convention.

The appendices can be amended at formal, biennial meetings of the party-countries or through a postal procedure.

Additional information may be obtained from the Federal Wildlife Permit Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C. 20240 (telephone 202/634-1496).